



First Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform

Zagreb, 24 - 25 October 2022

Statement by Ms Irène KÄLIN, President of the Swiss National Council

Dear President Jandroković, dear President Stefanchuk,

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Swiss parliament, I would like to begin by thanking Ukraine and Croatia for holding this First Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform.

This summit sends out an important signal in these difficult times, also in view of the immeasurable suffering caused by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine:

It is a signal to the aggressor that Ukraine is not alone, that the overwhelming majority of free and democratic nations stand with Ukraine, and that they vigorously condemn this aggression.

That we gather here today as parliamentarians – as representatives of the people – is also a sign. Because in this way we express the solidarity of our people with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

This platform is now more important than ever. More than eight years ago, Russia annexed Crimea in clear violation of international law. With hindsight, it is clear that this annexation was not an isolated incident, but merely the first phase of a larger, brutal plan.

The annexation and militarisation of Crimea was a precursor to the full-scale military aggression against Ukraine. Today, Russia is using Crimea as a base from which to launch military attacks on the rest of the country. There is a direct link between the occupation of Crimea and the threat to



Ukraine's continued existence as a sovereign, democratic and independent state.

Let me also express our great concern about the human rights situation in Crimea. Reports by human rights organisations describe severe restrictions, particularly concerning the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. They also report numerous cases of arbitrary detentions as well as forced displacements. In its capacity as depositary state of the Geneva Conventions, Switzerland underlines that the Russian occupying power in Crimea, must fulfil its obligations to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights.

The people of Crimea have suffered a double blow: First, the annexation eight years ago as well as the worsening of the human rights situation. And now the full-scale aggression against Ukraine, accompanied by a further restriction of fundamental freedoms, the recent imposition of martial law and the forced recruitment of Crimean residents by the Russian army.

Dear colleagues,

When I visited Kyiv in April, Ruslan Stefanchuk told me: "*We are directly elected by the people. When you and I speak together, it is as if the Ukrainians and the Swiss were speaking directly to each other.*"

That is what our meeting is about: today in Zagreb, we are demonstrating that we continue to stand by the people of Ukraine. And that we fight together for our fundamental and common values: democracy, justice, peace and human rights. Switzerland's support for a Ukrainian Crimea is unwavering. Crimea is Ukraine!

Thank you.